

The Michigan Legislature

Lansing, Michigan



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DEMOCRATIC LAWMAKERS INTRODUCE MICHIGAN WATER LEGACY ACT

*Act supports Governor's plan to regulate water withdrawal
and protect water resources*

LANSING – Two leading environmental Democratic lawmakers today unveiled a legislative initiative that would protect Michigan's fresh water aquifers and lakes by regulating water withdrawal. During a press conference in the Governor's Capitol office, State Senator **Liz Brater** (D-Ann Arbor) and State Representative **Chris Kolb** (D-Ann Arbor) joined Governor **Jennifer M. Granholm** and DEQ Director, **Steve Chester**, in announcing the Michigan Water Legacy Act, a comprehensive plan to manage Michigan's water resources and protect the Great Lakes' precious fresh water.

"The risk to Michigan's fresh water supply is greater today than perhaps at any other time in our state's history," Kolb said. "This is why it is imperative that we have a sound and prudent strategy to manage our precious water resources and proactively address the inevitable conflicts and disputes that will emerge."

Under the proposed plan, new facilities that make withdrawals from surface water or groundwater greater than two million gallons a day or greater than 100 million gallons a year would be required to obtain permits. Current water users would not be affected unless they sought to increase water withdrawals or use additional water sources. The plan would have immediate effect, but requirements would be phased in over the next five years toward full implementation in 2009. Annual reporting will be required of all permit holders.

"This priceless resource is becoming a desirable commodity to other states and even other countries without access to such assets," Brater said. "We need to make every effort to protect and conserve it."

The Michigan Water Legacy Act would also go far in meeting the goals set forth in the 1985 Great Lakes Charter, developed by a consortium of Great Lakes states and provinces, which include conserving and protecting the levels and flows of the Great Lakes and tributary and connecting waters.

"I commend Senator Brater and Representative Kolb for their efforts to protect the most valuable natural resource of our state--the Great Lakes," Governor Granholm said. "Our state is defined by its waters, which are critical to our state's economy. This legislation will make Michigan a regional leader in protecting the Great Lakes so that future generations may enjoy them."

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